THIEVES OF BOOKS.

Kleptomaniacs with Literary Inclinations Who Need Careful Watching.

[Philadelphia Times.]

"That book will cost you $1, sir," said a clerk in a Market street book store, politely, but with an incisive tone that showed he was not to be trifled with, to a young man whom he surprised in a remote corner, where he had been lingering long over a case of handsomely-bound volumes. The young man was well dressed and of gentlemanly appearance, and was evidently near-sighted. He glanced up hurriedly, his face colored, and his eyes, in spite of the friendly mask of a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, betrayed confusion and chagrin.

Then he drew from the pocket of his satinfaced overcoat a handsome copy of Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. With a face that would have afforded Burton an excellent study, he thumbed the volume a moment mumbled that the binding didn't exactly suit him and left the store with more speed than dignity.

"I had been watching him for twenty minutes," said the clerk. "Steal it? Of course he intended to steal it. You have no idea of the number of books that are stolen by apparently respectable people from the shelves of stores and libraries."

"I suppose hundreds of books are stolen from us every year," said Mr. Stuart, manager of one of our book stores. "In many cases the thieves are never caught. Frequently when they are detected they are found to be people of such good social standing that we mercifully permit them to settle the affair without the mortification of a public prosecution.

"Quite recently I detected a case of systematic sneak-thieving which had been going on for months. If I should give you the name of the offender you would be astonished. He is one of Philadelphia's most respected citizens. He baffled us for a long time, simply because I thought him above suspicion. Finally a clerk hinted to me that this gentleman was responsible for the recent disappearance of many valuable books. 'I miss a volume every time he leaves the store,' said the clerk. 'Impossible,' said I. 'He cannot be the man.'

"I placed a watch upon his movements, however, and detected him the very next time he came into the store. He settled the matter with us, and in consideration of his high reputation in the community we did not prosecute him. We caught a fellow a month or two ago who was gradually accumulating a whole set of Washington Irving's works by carrying out one at a time, in the hope that it would not be missed. He had secured 'The Sketch Book' and the 'Alhambra,' but we dropped on him just as he was getting away with 'Knickerbocker's History.' He was taking them out by the common process known as 'sub-coat-tailing.' Many people who would no take a penny belonging to another will steal books with apparent impunity. I know men whom I would trust with my watch and my pocket-book, but I would not trust them five minutes behind the shelves of this store.

"Experience tells me that a man whose tastes are literary and whose means are limited will always bear watching in a book store, especially if he is a frequent visitor. One of the most annoying experiences is to find that some literary sneak thief has taken one of a set or series of some rare edition which is not easily replaced. In this way I have recently had costly sets of Shakespeare, Carleton and Ruskin made wholly unsaleable.

"Books are frequently ruined in another way. Some of these kleptomaniacs have a penchant for the handsome steel engravings and portraits that often adorn a frontispiece. They take a book from the shelf, insert a wet string between the front leaves, and then quietly replace it. In fifteen or twenty minutes the string has so moistened the paste that the entire leaf can be removed without tearing it or making the least noise."

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe.

[Joe Howard in Philadelphia Press.]

She is petite, with a large head and oval face, the features of which, like all that branch of the Beecher family, are very heavy and strongly marked. Her eyes are large and lustrous, and generally beam with a roguish twinkle, that is fascinating to this day. She wears her hair precisely as when I first knew her, parted in the middle, where the Lord designed all women's hair should part, and terminating in long, pretty gray curls, which fall gracefully on either side of her face. Her manner is soft and quiet, almost deferential. She stoops, and always did, and the customary attitude of her hands is that described by Solomon, or the queen of Sheba, or some oldtime writer, when he said: "A little more sleep, a little more slumber and a little more folding of the hands to rest." Quiet dignity, a calm sense of superiority and gentle, unobtrusive womanly tenderness would seem to be the habit of this woman, whose name is known wherever the human tongue can speak and the mortal eye can read.

A Strange Problem.

["Rigolo" in New York Sun.]

The agricultural returns which have just been published in England present a remarkably strange problem. The cultivated area of Great Britain has increased 81,000 acres during the current year, and 1,363,000 acres since 1873, yet the period since 1873 has been the most disastrous of the century, and the food imported has increased in value from $293,290,000 in 1864 to $787,600,000 last year. During this period of increasing cultivation of the soil there has been a decrease of 1,011,000 acres in arable land, and, although there has been an increase of 2,375,000 in grazing land, there has been scarcely any increase in flocks and herds. The number of sheep has even decreased 3,259,000 in spite of the fact that the price of meat has been constantly rising during that period. This anomalous state of things is difficult to explain, except upon the theory of a greatly improved mode of living of the masses.

Baked Milk.

[Nebraska Farmer.]

Invalids are now fed on baked milk. The milk is put in a glass jar, covered with paper on top, and baked ten hours in the oven.

BRILLIANTS.

A sacred burden is this life ye bear;
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemly,
Stand up and walk beneath it steadfastly.
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin.
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.
—[Frances Kemble.

O you who linger on the night of toil
And long for day,
Take heart; the grandest hero is the man
Of whom the world shall say
That from the roadside of defeat he plucked
The flower of success,
Bravely and with a modesty sublime,
Not with blind eagerness.
—[W. T. Talbott.

There's always a river to cross;
Always an effort to make
If there's anything good to win,
Any rich prize to take;
Yonder's the fruit we crave,
Yonder the charming scene;
But deep and wide, with a troubled tide,
Is the river that lies between.
For rougher the way that we take
The stouter the heart and the nerve
The stones in our path we break,
Nor e'er from our impulse swerve
For the glory we hope to win
Our labors we count no loss;
'Tis folly to pause and murmur because
Of the river we have to cross.

THE DEPOPULATED HIGHLANDS.

The Country of the "Crofters"—Poverty and Hardship.

[Nineteenth Century.]

There are few Highland glens that do not contain traces of the banished population. In Lochaber, along the shores of Loch Arkaig, the home of the clan Cameron, the remains of which were once extensive townships may yet be seen. The celebrated Glencoe formerly teemed with a hardy population. Famous Glengarry is a sheep walk, and the powerful clan Macdonnell are now in Canada. Round Fort Augustus and far into the country of the clan Fraser is naught but desolation. In hundreds of straths in Ross-shire the wild heather has not even obliterated the green pastures, and the cultivated fields that once belonged to the MacKenzies and Munros, and from whence the different battalions of the gallant Ross-shire buffs marched to conquer at Maidra, at Seringapatam, at Assave and Argaum.

So late as 1849, when the present prime minister had already obtained political eminence, Hugh Miller attempted, but fruitlessly, to draw the attention of the British public to the work of destruction that was going on. He eloquently proclaimed that "while the law is banishing its tens for terms of seven and fourteen years, the penalty of deep-dyed crimes, irresponsible and infatuated power is banishing its thousands for life for no crime whatever." A large number of the depressed tenantry were sent to America; the remainder settled on the seashore, where they were cramped into small holdings, and have since lived. The tourist steaming along the wild coast of the western Highlands and islands may see perched on every cliff, in the most exposed situations and subject to the fury of Atlantic gales, the wretched hamlets that now contain the remnants of the Highland clans. Probably he will wonder how a population can at all manage to exist under such conditions. But there they are, elbowed to the very verge of their country.

For large tracts of that country the proprietors even now can show no scrap of document, their claim to possess resting solely on the fact that it has never been contested. Created and looked upon, like the foxes, as mere vermin that interfere with sport, discouraged and thwarted in every direction, these people, notwithstanding their poverty and the hardships of their lot, have maintained unimpaired the noblest attributes of their race. Crime of any kind is almost unknown among them. Their moral standard is the highest in Britain, contrasting in that respect most remarkably with their lowland neighbors, and no a few of the leading British statesmen lawyers, divines and soldiers of the past eighty years first saw the light in the crofters' huts. Far behind the strip of inhabited littoral stretch the Blue mountains, the snug and often fertile glen from whence the clans were banished now turned into silent wilderness inhabited only by sheep and deer, an an occasional shepherd or keeper. There are the vast tracts, rented by the American, Mr. Winans, as a hunting ground to be visited by that alien for two or three months and abandoned to solitude for the remainder of the year, when not even a native of the soil may plant his foot.

Portraits on Our Currency.

[Washington Republican.]

"As familiar as people are with money," said Superindent Casilear, "I don't believe one man in ten could tell you what heads are upon the different denominations of bank notes, while even bankers would hesitate before replying if you should ask them what portraits were placed upon the various bonds."

The reporter learned that the heads were located as follows On United States notes—$1, Washington; $2, Jefferson; $5 Jackson $10, Webster; $20, Hamilton; $50, Franklin; $100, Lincoln; $500, Gen. Mansfield; $1,000, De Witt Clinton $5,000, Madison, and $10,000 Jackson On silver certificates—$10, Robert Morris; $20, Commodore Decatur; $50, Edward Everett; $100, James Monroe; $500, Charles Sumner, and $1,000, W. L. Marcy. On gold notes—$20 Garfield; $50, Silas Wright; $100, Thomas H. Benton; $500, A. Lincoln; $1,000, Alexander Hamilton; $5,000, James Madison; and $10,000, Andrew Jackson.

Grocery Bags.

[Chicago Herald.]

Who has not noticed the increasing strength of grocery bags? A few years ago it was dangerous to attempt to carry heavy goods in them. Manufacturers tested all known paper-making material in their search for greater strength such as grasses, wild rice straw, Kentucky hemp, flax, linen waste, jute, and many others. Manilla was found most satisfactory, but very expensive. An inch ribbon of manilla paper has been made sufficiently strong to support 200 pounds. The same sized strip of cotton sack cloth gives way at twenty-eight pounds. Large quantities of old manilla rope are now worked up into paper bags.

Whitehall Times: Enthusiasm oils the wheels of genius.

A Pointed Reply.

[Editor's Drawer in Harper's.]

I venture (says a correspondent) to send you a pure specimen of crushing, contemptuous scorn.

In our lunatic asylum at S— we had, a few years ago, as medical superintendent and general manager, a pompous, self-sufficient old doctor with a very gushing manner and great obsequiousness to any visitor whom he might deem worth cultivating. It was more than suspected that this paternal and benevolent manner did not always characterize his intercourse with the patients, but was donned only on state occasions.

He had several hobbies, and would bore a visitor dreadfully with his overdone politeness and unceasing stream of talk about the institution and his wonderful management thereof.

On one occasion, after having been trotted all over the building by him to my great disgust, as I had called on business, and my time was precious, we were approaching his own private apartments, and on opening a door discovered a young woman of quiet, lady-like appearance seated in a small parlor and gazing through the window, with a fixed expression of weary sadness, on the beautiful view of woods and lawn and river without.

I did not realize she was a patient, and there was no occasion whatever for the doctor to disturb her. He spoke to her, however, in his blandest way, no doubt with a view of properly impressing, and said, "Well, Jane, and how are we this morning!"

She did not reply, but continued her sad and touching gaze.

He repeated the question, and added, "Come, Jane, you surely know who I am."

She dropped the arm which had supported her head, turned slowly to look at him, and said with a sigh of weary scorn, "Oh, yes; you—you are the urbane and gentlemanly superintendent."

The doctor and I left immediately.

Wisdom for Winter Weather.

[Philadelphia Times.]

How we shall warm our houses is not more important than how warm they shall be kept. This is readily told. In the apartment used as a sitting-room see that the mercury remains about 70 degrees, rather below than above this. In the sleeping apartment 60 degrees is a very comfortable temperature. A higher degree of heat than this would be quite admissible where there are young children."

The ventilation of rooms in which human beings must remain hours at a time is a very important matter, and one that is much neglected by individuals and builders as well. Really the majority of the houses in the city are about on a par in this particular with dry goods boxes, and separate rooms can only be kept anywher near reasonably ventilated by raising the window sash one inch from the bottom and lowering it a like distance from the top. By this means the air in the room is constantly renewed and drafts are avoided, which is also a desirable point.

The effect of muscular activity on the production of body heat is well known, and this makes it appear that an active habit is the best for the winter season, which is a fact for more reasons than the one just given.

For winter wear woolen fabrics are best because of their pliability and of their lightness as compared with the weight of cotton fabrics that would afford the same protection against the cold.

The substances to be eaten and drunk in winter should be used hot as possible and should contain a maximum amount of fat. Hot milk, beef tea, chocolate and soups are especially well adapted as foods for winter use, and fat fries of oysters, sausage, etc., are admissible to a greater extent than at other times.

Gen. Custer's Widow.

[Philadelphia Times.]

Gen. Custer's widow is now living in New York, trying to get along as best she can upon the slim pension the government awards her. She is a useful, hard-working little body, and is connected with the Women's Decorative Art association. She possesses many of the relics of the late war which her husband left behind. The most interesting perhaps is the flag of truce under cover of which Gen. Lee surrendered to Grant. It came into Gen. Sheridan's hands, who handed it to Custer, saying: "This belongs to you; I know of no one who has done more to end this war than George A. Custer." The flag is a small white towel, which was tied to a pole and carried at the head of the little column of cavalry that appeared in Custer's front on the morning of the surrender. These curious reminders of the conflict are becoming more valuable every day.

The Bride's Trousseau.

[New York Tribune.]

The largest item of expense of a fashionable wedding, of course, is the bride's trousseau. As many young ladies are not content with less than a dozen dresses, costing from $50 to $500 apiece, it is best to put a generous estimate on this expense. Indeed there is no limit to it except the parent's purse, for trousseaus sometimes cost tens of thousands of dollars. The bride in some cases gives the bridesmaids their dresses, though they generally buy them for themselves. Being usually composed of surah or nun's veiling or other comparatively inexpensive material, they do not usually cost over $50 or $100 each. The bill for a bridal toilet of white satin embroidered in pearls or brocade velvet with point lace not infrequently reaches $500.

Worth's Employes.

[Chicago Herald.]

Worth has a large establishment in the Rue de la Paix, where 400 young women stitch, stitch, stich, not at all in poverty, hunger and rags. His employes number 1,200 in all, and during the commune, when nobody ordered dresses or anything else, Worth provided for seventy of his workwomen, though he, too, suffered for want of decent food. Worth is English, born about 60 years ago in Lincolnshire. Brains was his only capital. That the man is a genius in his profession is as evident as the multiplication table. He inherited his ability from his mother, who possessed excellent taste.

Fielding: Custom may lead a man into many errors, but it justifies none.